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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 001483

DEPT FOR A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: 9/29 HELICOPTER CRASH - NO EVIDENCE OF SMALL WEAPONS FIRE

REF: A) KHARTOUM 1468  
B) KHARTOUM 1387

¶1. (SBU) Poloff spoke with UNAMID Public Information Director Kamal Saiki on October 5 regarding the September 29 crash of a UNAMID-contracted helicopter, which resulted in the deaths of three Russians and 1 Sudanese. Saiki said that UNAMID has received no indication that the Mi-8 helicopter, contracted by UNAMID with the Sudanese firm Badr Airways to ferry cargo within South Darfur, crashed due to ground fire from Kalma Camp. Witness' testimonies offer contradictory accounts of the flight's final moments, and Saiki indicated that UNAMID intends to take a hands-off approach to the incident, given that, as he pointed out, "The only connection between UNAMID and the helicopter is the cargo and its destination." Saiki said that as Badr Airways is a Sudanese firm whose helicopter crashed on Sudanese territory, the Government of Sudan's (GOS) Civil Aviation Authority should take the lead on any investigation.

¶2. (SBU) In an interview published Sunday in the nominally independent Akher Lazha newspaper, an NCP official pushed the interpretation that the downed helicopter took fire from inside Kalma Camp. NCP Secretary for Organizational Affairs Qutb el Mahdi claimed that the "attack" on the helicopter has given the GOS justification for an expedited evacuation of Kalma Camp. The article added the incident "proves to the world that the government of Sudan was right when it underscored the importance of its arms collection campaign in South Darfur."

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The GOS is trying its best to pin the blame for the attack on small weapons fire from Kalma Camp, but there has been no confirmation that this claim has any basis in reality. Although UNAMID remains passive on the issue, post plans to urge UNAMID to become more engaged in the investigation given the apparently false link to Kalma Camp, which could affect security within the camp and the GOS posture toward the camp. However, Saiki is correct in stating that the CAA will have the lead on this investigation, and it will likely be difficult to verify exactly what transpired. Until more information can be obtained, we would strongly caution against any speculation suggesting a link between the helicopter crash and alleged small weapons fire from Kalma Camp or from rebels, as has been advanced by some countries including Russia.

ASQUINO